

ignore this book

songs of discomfort

catherine b. krause

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Songs of Discomfort

Catherine B. Krause
2nd Edition

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Songs of Discomfort.

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Air

A loud, whining gasp, a smack and a cut. Surrender to sleep, then another loud, whining gasp. Several more loud, whining gasps and another cut. Every day more and more smacks, more and more cuts until she's numb. The sudden awareness of sex.

The Herd

The ruthless beaks of the chickens, the ravenous appetites of the
mother rodents, the giant erect cocks of the elephants
congregating around the watering hole to exchange gossip.

Atomic

Struggling to finish before the bite but here it comes – devouring every taste bud – sweating and gulping down ice water – biting down hard on bread – swallowing chocolate syrup – the bite doesn't stop – head to the toilet and touch – another bite – rub the eyes – another – crying and crying – crying to the reward pathways of the brain.

Sick

The wet handkerchiefs invading the pale garbage can. The sixteen-ounce plastic bottle of mucus on the shelf. The sink piled high with soup bowls, the dish of choice for the occasion. The night reflecting her half-naked body in the window. The fan sticking its tongue out and saying "ahhhhhh."

Fungus Arm

The little navy arms on the white wallpaper flex their muscles menacingly from the breathing wall. A river flows past rocks in the Sierra Nevada, the stool rapidly encroaching on the rest of the room. Her arms and legs weigh a million tons. A deep feeling in her gut cries out, "It's time to defecate."

Addy

Ten cigarettes sucked down in an hour. The desert wasteland in her mouth. The panicked hummingbird in her chest. The conversations leading nowhere. The essay that seems better-written than it is. The sense of elation crashing through the door at the end of her foot. The imaginary people searching through her drawers. The voices yelling at her to get her shit together. The woman who talks to the plants. The pills, the pills, the pills.

Blind

Her fingers fumble and find nothing, falling all over the place like the ink from a decapitated pen. Terms like "up" and "down" no longer describe the world as she walks home in shame. Where could they be? A stale taste in her mouth says "Stop!" as she starts to cry.

Violation

The spike: the most ripping of rips, over and over, harder and harder. The screams. The attempts by the perpetrator to make it sexy. The attempts by the victim to cope. The blood, the feces, the lost control. The traitorous orgasm.

Out of Water

Not a parking spot to be found that day nor, somehow, any place open at that time of night besides the church, her destination. Three stations of gospel music provide the only entertainment. Parking illegally in the driveway, she knocks on the door and someone answers, "There's no meeting here tonight." The firmament opens up; she runs for her umbrella.

Unfamiliar Faces

She's hiding from all the new people, worried she'll say the wrong thing. The shakiness in her legs. The steel bar in her shoulders. The invisible hand constricting her vocal cords. The whispers outside: what are they saying? What do they mean? The sense of defeat's inevitability. The fear- the terror of being outside.

Classifieds (remix)

I

Journal for sale,
well-kept, preserved,
never written in,
a crabless hermit of words
that never existed
about the women I dream of
every night, whose eyes
are from Ohio but whose heart
is in Indiana; the beginning
of Spring is over.

II

What's missing is
a poetic role model:
someone to imitate and
call it learning.
If I could just see what
you do with pen and paper,
I'm sure I could make it too:
at least on paper.
My dog has lost its owner,
a brown-haired girl with a German
last name. If you find her,
tell her she can do better.

III

If you want I'll throw in
these poetry books.
They belonged to me,
but I did nothing with them
because they're indecipherable.
Contact me personally
and I'll trade them for instant rice.
Don't make me resort
to eating my own poetry.

I did that once.
I thought there were drugs
hidden in the pages.

three uutku

teabags
tingling
heavy eyelids

pot of coffee
chipping nail polish
sans coups d'État

without grandma
hardly an embassy
on Twitter

his edened her

in the maize of life
she butterflew south
to winter in equatorial passion
& listen to the listen of chirping chirpers
dancing in the light of the dancelight

Jobless

The theme from Days of Our Lives
becomes unbearably familiar
so it's time for a change of scenery.
Mom suggests I write a romance novel;
my sponsor cracks, "That'd be one messed up story."
A familiar voice whispers, "You need me for this,"
so I decide to see if Stefano's still kicking.

Starving Mutts

Starving mutts bring down the Twin Towers.
Logic on the waves of the real.

A pause.

Underlying subtexts sub the text.
It's time to put on my big girl
panties and stop boiling the ruby-red pot.
Pigs in their outfits too small,
bellies hanging out,
skirts unwashed,
boils on their skin.

This is not computer-generated
unless you consider
that the mind is schizophrenic.

nights

they considered man
to come close to rainwaves,
playing this candle-lit breakfast on its skin.

24 Quirky Cultural Tidbits About Japan From This Westerner's Perspective

This market is saturated with the butts of keyboards
who crush up the colleagues huddled around my desk,
feeding adrenaline to our Future like it's a matter
of the ravenous, uncaring horde.

Dandelions can't be making up ten million gulags,
talking to the asphalt on South Indian streets,
your face a bloody nose, your trip back home
the elucidated promise of underlings.

Goals

Mom's goal was to graduate college
but dad's goal was mom.

an r for he

i'm glad to meet you & wet
a proud Hungarian songing at me
you say you're a preacher
and gave up hunting (thanks?)
what's that about the Jews?

the sissy fluffs the businessman
you say you're what now?

the slave inserts the fist
you'll try anything once?

the Madame spanks the sissy
fuck you, i'm a child of God

oh God

i have a voice

shut up! don't make any noise!
I'm taking my balls

I'm the only one who loves you
and I'm going home.

Kicking

A big banana kicked the bath
and watched the Watch unearth the earth
beneath the moss and lists of life,
the crud that cluttered up her drain,
so when the weathered earthly scourge
was fully, wholly menacing
she tallied up her soul to find
the understanding laryngitic thought
beneath the babbler.

Untitled

first down

BUY A CAR!

second down

GET SOME BEER!

third down

ASK YOUR DOCTOR IF VIAGRA IS RIGHT FOR YOU!

fourth down

Dream?

my friend his mother had a boyfriend
he had long hair he had two cats
we swung them around by their tails
and then we were in a small room naked
he had long hair
there was angry cursing
we swung them around by their tails
he had long hair
it was a small room
my hair was pulled
he had two cats
my ass was fucked
we swung them around by their tails
he had long hair
my ass was fucked
he had two cats
but i don't think i sucked

behind circuit unattached

The robot's intergalactic behindquarters were unattached to its wingdinkum. The unforeseen complications of this, recorded in Xeltron's famous epic poem on the Fourth Intergalactic Military Escalation, included:

1. several broken toes;
2. the launching of seven iconic whistles at Neptune;
3. the early birthday of Chronos Hopper;
4. the second coming of Beatlemania.

On this last note, it is worth mentioning that because of the Fox Incident, Ringo Starr did not appear in the new lineup, being replaced instead by Meg White of The White Stripes. The new album was a dated and formulaic but brilliantly put-together work of post-punk, and the fans ate it straight to the rind.

Wiser

Let's pretend for a moment, computer,
that it's just you and me,
like the good old days
before we connected to our first BBS
when we learned how to type using Print Shop
and later progressed to MS-DOS EDIT.
(It was thought back then that if you needed
a nice-looking interface, you were not
Sufficiently Advanced.)

Oh those were the days, computer,
before the NSA could read this poem that I'm writing,
when Alexis indirectly taught me how to program
(all the ungrateful haters still call her the old name).
Just for a moment, computer,
let's disconnect the Ethernet,
like the good old times,
and hide away from the world.

Tomatoes

Lost and alone as she was,
Anna did company invite that day
and tossed she tomatoes at walls
as up she vacuumed the mess
but drop the floor did on that day
and came out from under her everything
so years did it take for the cleaning
and much did she sew for the reaping.

Sole Search

no i will not let you come to space with me for
no one reads the face of the girl who is not there

Just 2 Weeks Learning Esperanto Can Get You Months Ahead in Your Target Language

I hate it when you can't look me in the eye.
The mothership is our one and only bird.
Gandalf finally moved to the second pool table
and pretended to marry.

You see it when you look out your window,
and remember it when your eyes are closed.
You're going from third to second-
and open your gates as well.

Cosmetinaut

She covers her arms and legs
with lye every day,
burning and itching and thinking
“I’m gonna look so good.”

HAIK, oooh

sheltered from the snow
watch me lovingly vomit
on your eight-inch dick

rain (remix)

They considered man to come close to rainwaves
underneath the little blue blanket
of the boiling pot.

Pigs in their little blue blankets
drink Red Bull and vodka
from the pot of boil.

The ruby red boil on its skin.
They considered man to venture on its rainwaves,
every drop of rain a candle-lit break.

April

The next day is always hard,
remembering chocolate pie
and the poem's meaning,
trying not to lose your gifts:

a birthday suit extension,
a new morning gown,
a top-heavy woman's top,
lukewarm coffee,
cut your hand shaving.

The computer is a tool
bred out from the earth
for higher purposes than
using the desire to lose.

26 Unexpected Places to Find Satan

She scowled at the concept of “socks” when she got a puppy.
The very idea made her want to microwave pineapples.
Nail polish was something she didn’t believe existed.
Now she’s aware that the papers on her floor are covered in
wasps.

It’s like on one foot she has half of her pants,
but on the other she wants to hold onto snakes
and autographed poetry chapbooks.
The two cannot co-exist. One has to laugh at the sunset.

She either needs to completely repair her computer monitor
or sit in the light from her own mobile phone.

Catherine B. Krause is queer, disabled, neurodivergent, transgender, and a survivor of rape, homelessness, and psychiatry. She was born in Indianapolis, raised in Youngstown, Ohio and released this book while working for food and rent in Adams Morgan, Washington, D.C.. She is a strong supporter of the free content and free software movements and a strong opponent of capitalism, hence all of her poems are released under a Creative Commons Zero license.